

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A component cost estimation system for estimating a cost of a component, said system comprising:

a memory which stores cost information for associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another; and a computer, wherein

said computer:

receives data for designating a material of a component to be manufactured, and a portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps to be applied to the material;

retrieves a cost associated with the designated material, and costs associated with the designated portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information;

retrieves costs associated with predetermined standard manufacturing steps which are used for the remaining portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information; and

generates data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the designated component based on each of the retrieved costs.

Claim 2 (Original): The component cost estimation system according to claim 1, wherein:

the cost information includes information associating the manufacturing steps, devices used in the manufacturing steps, and costs involved in using the devices with one another, said computer:

receives data for designating the material, the manufacturing steps, and the devices used in the manufacturing steps;

retrieves costs associated with the designated material and the designated devices from the cost information; and

determines a result of estimation based on a sum of the retrieved costs.

Claim 3 (Original): The component cost estimation system according to claim 1, wherein the cost information includes information associating the manufacturing steps and costs of child components which are the components to be used in the manufacturing steps with each other.

Claim 4 (Original): The component cost estimation system according to claim 1, wherein:

the manufacturing steps include a pressing process;

the cost information includes information associating a pressing device to be used in the pressing process and a cost involved in using the pressing device with each other; and said computer;

receives data for designating the pressing process, a material to which the pressing process is applied, and the pressing device to be used in the pressing process;

retrieves costs associated with the designated material and the designated pressing device from the cost information; and

determines a result of estimation based on a sum of the retrieved costs.

Claim 5 (Original): The component cost estimation system according to claim 4, wherein said computer obtains costs of molds to be used in steps included in the pressing process, and uses the obtained costs as costs retrieved from the cost information.

Claim 6 (Original): The component cost estimation system according to claim 5, wherein said computer obtains the costs of the molds which are to be used in the respective steps included in the pressing process, and which are either newly manufactured, or manufactured by remodeling an existing mold.

Claims 7-8 (Cancelled).

Claim 9 (Original): The component cost estimation system according to claim 1, further comprising a reception server which receives an access from outside via a network, and sends the data representing the result of estimation of the cost of the component obtained by said computer to an accessor.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): A component cost estimation system which receives accesses from a plurality of working bodies via a network, and estimates a cost of a component, said system comprising:

a memory which stores cost information for associating a material of a component to be manufactured, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps to be applied to the material, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another;

a reception server which receives designation data for designating the material of the component and a portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps to be applied to the material from the working bodies who request an estimation via said network; and

an estimation computer,

wherein said estimation computer:

retrieves costs associated with the material and the portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps designated by the designation data received by said reception server from the cost information;

retrieves costs associated with predetermined standard manufacturing steps which are used for the remaining portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information;

generates estimation result data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs; and

sends the estimation result data to the working bodies who have requested the estimation via said network.

Claim 11 (Original): The component cost estimation system according to claim 10, wherein:

said reception server receives a browsing request for browsing a content of the cost information; and

said estimation computer sends the content of the cost information to a sender of the browsing request via said network in response to the browsing request received by said reception server.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The component cost estimation system according to claim 10, further comprising a verification data memory which stores verification data for verifying the working bodies who request an estimation,

wherein said reception server:

receives verification data sent from the working bodies via said network; and
determines whether or not to receive the designation data from the working bodies based on the verification data sent from the working bodies and the verification data stored in said verification data memory, and refuses to receive the designation data when determined not to receive the designation data.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The component cost estimation system according to claim 10, wherein the cost information is made up of information obtained based on a cost of a component provided by a provider selected according to a predetermined standard from among a plurality of providers who provide substantially the same component.

Claims 14-16 (Cancelled).

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): A component cost estimation method for estimating a cost of a component, comprising:

storing cost information for associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps;

receiving data for designating a material of a component to be manufactured, and a portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps to be applied to the designated material;

retrieving a cost associated with the designated material, and costs associated with the designated portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information;

retrieving costs associated with predetermined standard manufacturing steps which are used for the remaining portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information; and

generating data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): A component cost estimation method for receiving accesses from a plurality of working bodies via a network, and estimating a cost of a component, said method comprising:

storing cost information for associating a material of a component to be manufactured, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps to be applied to the material, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another;

receiving designation data for designating the material of the component and a portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps to be applied to the material from the working bodies who request an estimation via said network;

retrieving costs associated with the material and the portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps designated by the received designation data from the cost information;

retrieving costs associated with predetermined standard manufacturing steps which are used for the remaining portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information; and

generating estimation result data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs; and

sending the estimation result data to the working bodies who have requested the estimation via said network.

Claim 19 (Cancelled).

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): A computer-readable recording medium which stores a program for controlling a computer, which is connected to a memory for storing cost information associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another, to perform:

receiving data for designating a material of a component to be manufactured and a portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps to be applied to the material;

retrieving a cost associated with the designated material, and costs associated with the designated portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information;

retrieving costs associated with predetermined standard manufacturing steps which are used for the remaining portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information; and

generating data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): A computer-readable recording medium which stores a program for controlling a computer, which is connected to a reception server for receiving designation data for designating a material of a component to be manufactured and a portion of a plurality of manufacturing steps to be applied to the material from a plurality of working bodies who request an estimation via a network, and is also connected to a memory for storing cost information for associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another, to perform:

retrieving costs associated with the material and the portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps designated by the designation data received by said reception server from the cost information;

retrieving costs associated with predetermined standard manufacturing steps which are used for the remaining portion of the plurality of manufacturing steps from the cost information; and

generating estimation result data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs; and

sending the estimation result data to the working bodies who have requested the estimation via said network.

Claims 22-32 (Cancelled).

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): The component cost estimation system according to claim 1, wherein:

said memory stores the cost information associated with each region engaging in manufacturing the component;

said computer:

receives data for designating a region engaging in manufacturing the component; and

determines a result of estimation of the cost of the component based on costs retrieved from the cost information associated with the designated region.